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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 4 June 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to your attention the attached Snagov Declaration, adopted at the international seminar entitled "The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Social Policies and Daily Life, The Evaluation of Current Projects and Case Studies", which was held at Bucharest (Lake Snagov), from 29 April to 2 May 1993 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 115 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Ioan BARAC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

Snagov Declaration adopted on 1 May 1993 at the seminar entitled "The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Social Policies and Daily Life, The Evaluation of Current Projects and Case Studies"

1. The participants at the seminar entitled "The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Social Policies and Daily Life, The Evaluation of Current Projects and Case Studies", which was held at Bucharest (Lake Snagov), from 29 April to 2 May 1993, examined different aspects of the situation of the Romanies in their countries, expressed their preoccupation with issues related to them, and effected an exchange of experience regarding possible methods of broaching their common problems.

In order to assure that the policies followed at the national and international levels take into account, as much as possible, the actual situation and preoccupations of the Romanies as a minority in their respective countries, as well as in other European countries, all participants agreed to bring to the attention of their States and to pertinent international organizations the recommendations set forth below.

2. The participants appreciated that the Romanies can and should live as members with full rights in every country of the world "together and equal" with all other citizens, the motto under which the seminar proceeded.

The participants believe that States should take all necessary measures to assure the respect of constitutional and national laws regarding the equality of rights and non-discrimination - in short, the respect for the human rights of all citizens, including the Romanies.

The participants declared their support for the adoption, at national levels, of necessary policies, measures, and programmes that have as their goal the realization of the equal opportunity and full participation of the Romanies in the political, economic and social realm, together with and alongside all other citizens of their respective countries.

The participants also consider it necessary to act at the governmental level and in the framework of Romanies' parties and associations to stimulate participation of the Romanies in democratic institutions, especially at the local level.

3. The participants expressed their concerns regarding the acts of intolerance and xenophobia, and manifestations of violence against the Romanies and their communities. Although they are conscious that such acts are of a social and local character, they believe that the risk that such acts will be repeated continues to exist.

They expressed their desire that State bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations, including those of the Romanies, should each act within their respective domains, as well as in cooperation with each other, where possible, for the prevention of such acts and manifestations, which transgress human

rights and provoke human suffering. They also believe in the necessity of adopting national legislation that could sanction the use of mass media for the incitement of intolerance, xenophobia and racial discrimination.

It is necessary to take action so that judicial procedures develop much more rapidly and much more objectively, so that all persons, including those who belong to the Romanies minority, have faith in the justice system.

The participants underlined the importance of education for all peoples of the need for a spirit of peaceful human relations in local communities, irrespective of ethnic origins, and the rejection of xenophobia and racism, which violates this spirit.

4. The participants pointed to specific economic and social problems of the Romanies and of their communities, such as unemployment, lack of housing and illiteracy. The necessity that State bodies accord all attention to the solution of those problems, in consideration of the full equality of rights and the specific conditions of each community, was emphasized.

They also underlined the necessity for the solution of general social security problems (unemployment assistance, social assistance, family allocations, medical assistance etc.), especially for the most disadvantaged categories of the population in whose ranks are often found the Romanies. Similarly, importance was attached to the organization of vocational and professional training programmes in order to attract the greatest possible number of Romanies to productive activities. The participants consider especially necessary the promotion of a number of projects in order to facilitate the development of Romanies' communities in the domains of housing, education and health care, as well as concerning the expression and development of their cultural identities.

The participants stressed the importance of vigorously supporting actions at the local level, in the framework of municipalities and communes, for the development of programmes and projects designed to address Romanies' problems concerning the exercise of their rights as equal citizens.

The participants appeal to all intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to institutions and academic circles, and to bodies concerned with human rights to accord human and material support for the realization of such projects in as many countries and localities as possible. The Romanies' associations and organizations are called upon to mobilize the members of the Romanies' communities to participate and cooperate in the realization of such projects, in accordance with their respect for human rights and their acceptance of corresponding civic responsibilities, and in the context of their specific culture and needs for equal access to decent living conditions in the localities in which they live.

5. The participants underlined the necessity that States that have returned Romanies living there illegally should examine, together with the States to which those persons were returned, the initiation of certain projects and assistance programmes for the vocational and professional training of those persons.

Likewise, the participants believe that all States of Europe that decide to expel persons coming from other countries or that take other legal measures regarding such persons must assure the integral respect of those persons' rights, including their property rights and the return of personal goods. The international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations of the respective countries, should be involved as much as possible in the establishment and realization of projects and programmes in furtherance of this goal.

6. The participants declare their support for the extension of lines of communication and cooperation between localities and territorial units from all over Europe, where stable communities of Romanies live, which could lead to the promotion of cultural and artistic exchanges and to a reciprocal familiarity and understanding of their experiences.

The participants call upon the territorial and local councils of Europe, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, to establish constant contacts for the exchange of information and experience regarding the social integration and participation of Romani in the civic, economic and cultural life in their respective localities and territorial units. In this way, a network of those councils and organizations that are interested in this domain can be created.

The participants maintained the necessity of adopting and implementing a European programme, in order to achieve a better understanding of the Romani culture and a better reflection of the situation of this minority in the mass media in order to eliminate anti-Romanies prejudice.

It was noted that the relationship which must be established between the school and the social medium of the Romanies, in the sense of adapting the educational system so that the number of absentees and drop-outs belonging to this minority can be steadily decreased, was highly relevant.

Taking note with interest of the activities of The Permanent Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the participants address an appeal to the Secretary of the Conference to support the initiatives for the creation of such networks for exchanging information and experience by according the special and logistical technical assistance necessary to include, on a step-by-step basis, as many localities within European countries as possible.

During the seminar, the participants took the initiative of organizing such networks, starting with the experiences of Romanian localities and counties in which such projects have been applied over the past two years.

7. The participants underlined the necessity of international organizations, both those in the domain of human rights and those that deal with financial and economic problems, to include Romanies' issues in their activities and to support projects and programmes of social and economic cooperation and development that should take into account the interests of the entire population, including the Romanies.

8. The participants examined a series of concrete proposals and ideas in various domains concerning the methods of acting at the local level, in

localities and communities, to address the economic and social concerns of the Romanies, as well as the problems of cooperation with other segments of the population in each country.

They recommend that the Government and international organizations examine those proposals and ideas within the context of current possibilities and concrete conditions, in order to incorporate and implement them as part of their short-term and long-term policies.

9. Numerous participants referred to international documents that establish the standard norms regarding fundamental human rights and liberties, and the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including the Romanies: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); the Final Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the CSCE; the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992; the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1992.

They underlined the necessity that the European States take into account the provisions of those documents in the policies which they adopt and in the implementation of those policies.

10. The participants at the Bucharest (Snagov) seminar believe in the necessity of organizing similar meetings in the near future, and express the hope that other countries and organizations will join in this initiative and support the organization of such meetings.

The participants at the seminar request the appropriate international organizations to distribute and present this Declaration as a working document at those meetings that have themes related to our seminar.